

CHAPTER VI: RECREATION

6 INTRODUCTION

Claremont's recreation facilities are managed by the Parks & Recreation Department, which is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Claremont's residents. This dedication is demonstrated through the wide range of publicly accessible programs and facilities. Opportunities for, and easy access to, recreation is a major contribution to an individual's quality of life. The amenities offered by the Parks & Recreation Department have a significant impact the City's residents and should be an integral part of land use planning for the City.

The Parks & Recreation Department's offices are located in the Goodwin Community Center on Broad Street. The Parks & Recreation Director is also the Administrator of the Goodwin Community Center. In addition to the Director, the Department has a Superintendent of Parks & Facilities and two full-time laborers plus additional seasonal help for park and outdoor facility maintenance including playing fields, playgrounds, and the John McLane Clark Outdoor Pool. These employees answer directly to the Superintendent of Parks & Facilities

7 RECREATION PROGRAMS

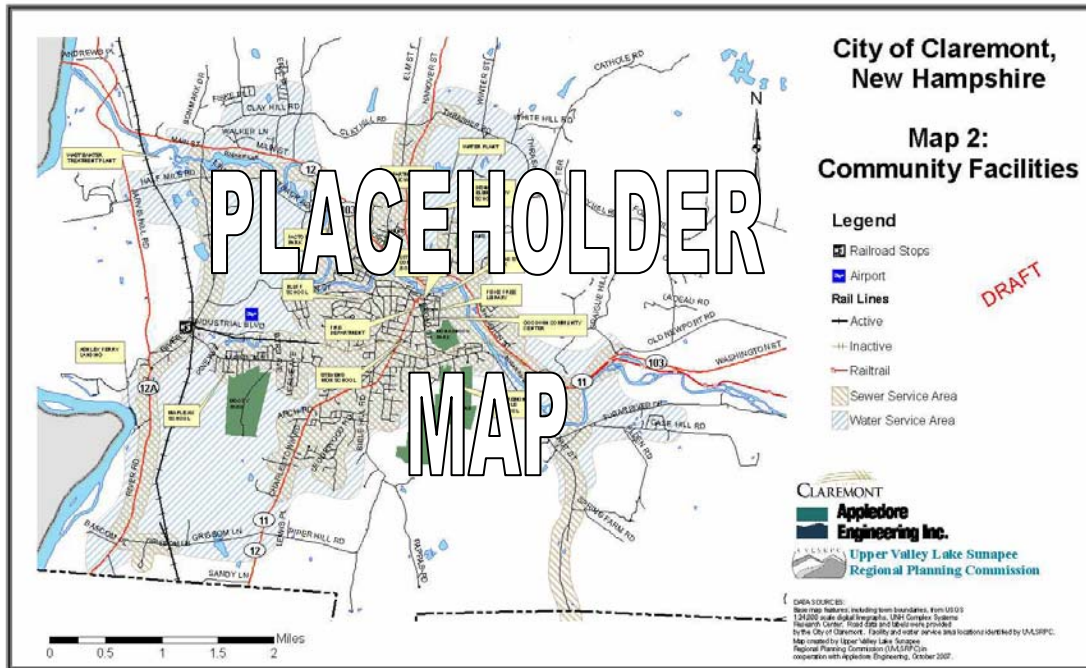
The Parks & Recreation Department and Goodwin Community Center sponsor several types of recreation programs throughout the year. These include aquatics classes, sports and fitness classes, and special events. Special programs are offered for preschool and school age children. Non-residents are welcome to register for these programs as well and are charged a slightly higher fee.

8 MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

8.1 Existing Facilities

Public recreation facilities are shown on Map 6-1. These facilities include the Goodwin Community Center facility, eight major multipurpose parks, and other minor facilities. The distribution of these parks throughout the City, particularly in proximity to downtown neighborhoods enables a broad range of uses for these facilities including neighborhood parks and green space, playing fields for organized activities and team sports, and community events. Table 6-2 summarizes these facilities and the predominant uses at the respective properties.

Map 6-1: Overall Facilities Map for Moody Park and Adjacent City Land



8.1.1 Charles Goodwin Community Center

The Goodwin Community Center (GCC) is located next to the Post Office on Broad Street. The Center was established in 1942 with buildings, endowments, and the E. Charles Goodwin Community Center Commission. Funding currently comes from the City of Claremont with revenues supplemented by facility rentals and user fees.

The GCC facility is a collection of buildings that have been constructed over time to meet the evolving community needs. The facility houses the Goodwin-Bailey Indoor Pool, a game room, a meeting room, a full court indoor Gymnasium, and an outdoor basketball court. The second and third floors of the main building are closed to public use because the building does not meet current building and life safety codes for such use.

The Goodwin-Bailey Indoor Pool is a four-lane, 25-yard pool located behind the Goodwin Community Center and is open year round. Built in 1950, it has a boy's and a girl's locker room and showers, a lobby area, and a pool office.

8.1.2 Broad Street Park

The Broad Street Park, between Broad Street and Pleasant Street, provides an attractive 0.65-



Figure 6-1: Aerial View of Broad Street Park

acre of green space adjacent to the central business district. The park facility also stretches up Broad Street to South Street and includes all the green space between the sidewalk and roadway curbing.

The park includes historic community structures like the Bandstand, War Monuments for Veterans, and the Freedom Garden Memorial dedicated to the victims and families of September 11th. The park also features seasonal decorations, serves as a community green near City Hall, and is the site of the Claremont Farmer's Market.

8.1.3 Factory Street Park

This small neighborhood park is open to the public with green space and a view of the Sugar River. The Factory Street Park was established in 1978 and is now a 0.35-acre parcel at the corner South Main Street and Factory Street.

8.1.4 Veterans Park

Veterans Park, situated along Veterans Park Road, is the site of the John McLane Clark Outdoor Pool, a lighted softball field, playground, and horseshoe pits. The 18-acre park is open daily from 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM with park facilities open seasonally.

The John McLane Clark Outdoor Pool operates seasonally from June to September and offers public access for recreation and organized activities. The bath house facilities and pool equipment require significant upgrades to continue cost-effective service to the community. These needs will be discussed later in this chapter.

8.1.5 LaCasse Park

LaCasse Park was dedicated to the memory of local veteran Oliver LaCasse and the soldiers who fought and died in World War I. This small neighborhood park is located at the corner of North Street and Lincoln Heights. The Memorial Anti Tank Gun is in need of restoration. The PAK-40 75MM Anti Tank Gun was made by Panzer Abwehr Kanor and has been determined to be a historical piece of armor built in Germany and was captured by American forces and returned to the United States. Date and time is unknown.



Figure 6-2: LaCasse Park Memorial

8.1.6 Visitor Center Common

Visitor Center Common is located along the Sugar River near the Claremont Visitor Center at 14 North Street. This property is approximately 7 acres with nearly 1,400 feet of Sugar River shoreline. The Visitor Center Common occupies a portion of the overall parcel with pedestrian facilities, open space, and pedestrian connections across the Sugar River to the Mill District and downtown, North Street, and Spring Street. The green space is currently used for passive recreation and home to many special community events and functions.

8.1.7 Sarah B.H. Smith Riverside Park

The Sara B.H. Smith Riverside Park is located adjacent to the Washington Street/North Street intersection near the downtown. This park is approximately 2.6 acres in size with 470 linear feet of Sugar River shoreline. The park facilities include a skate park and open space for passive recreation, and access to the river.

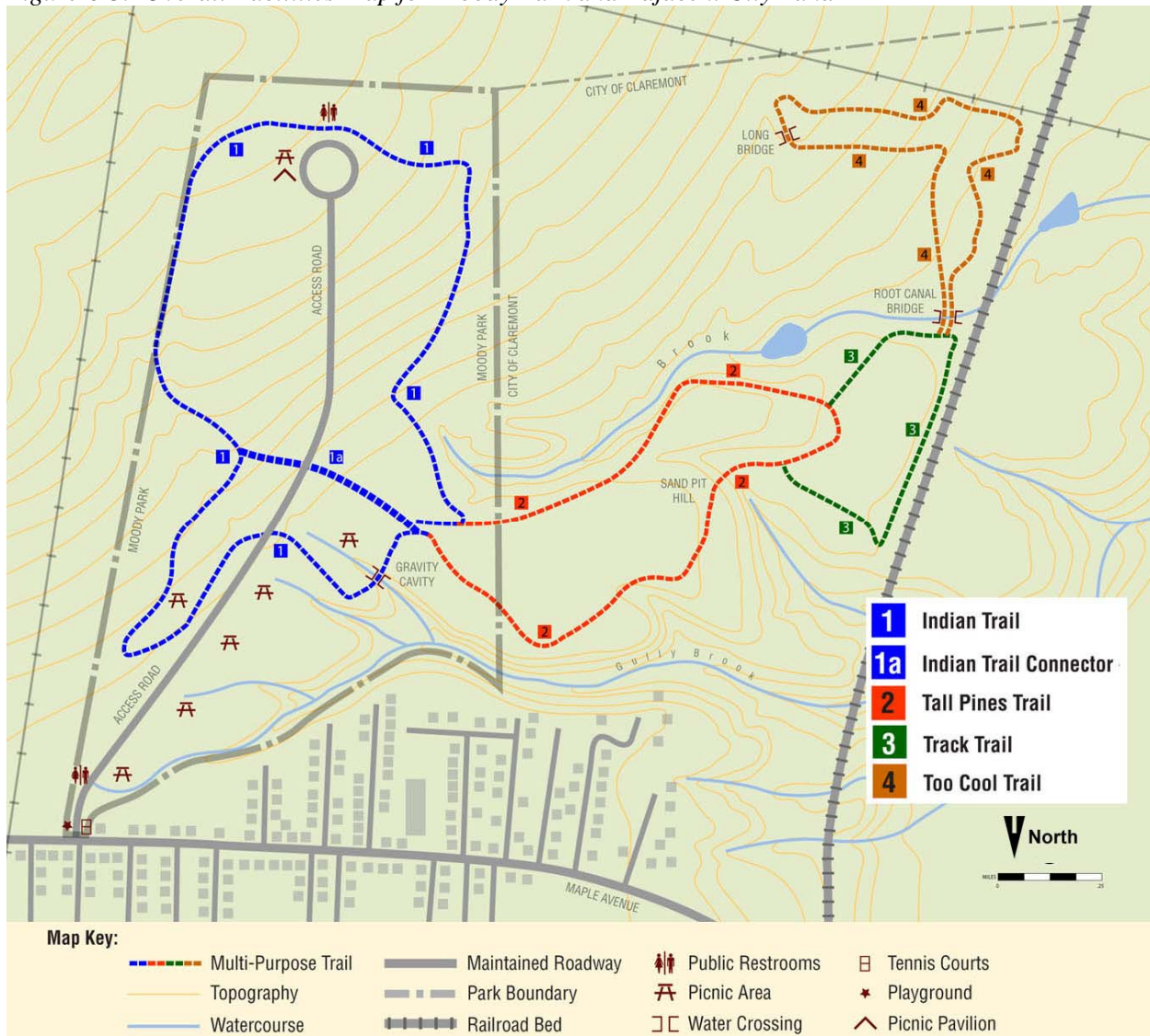
8.1.8 Moody Park

In March of 1916, William H.H. Moody, a retired Claremont Businessman, donated the land known as Moody Park. Moody's gift to the City was described at the time as "a donation, for use as a public park and recreation ground, to be [enjoyed] for free by the people of Claremont." The Moody Park property offers picnic areas and a pavilion, a playground, tennis courts, a seasonal ice skating rink, a paved road, and trails as illustrated in Figure 6-3. The park is open to vehicular traffic Memorial Day to Columbus Day (only on weekends after Labor Day) and is open only to hiking, biking, and skiing during the winter. Park hours are 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM.

Moody Park is approximately 95 acres and abuts approximately 215 acres of municipal land on two parcels to the west and south (one parcel shown in Figure 6-3). This aggregated collection of City properties results in a 320-acre, City-owned open space available for outdoor recreation opportunities.

The City's Forestry Management Plan addresses the current and future needs within the park forest. Plans include timber cuts that will address the aging forest and the many invasive species that have developed over the years. The Forest Plan also addresses trail enhancements and improvements within the park facility. The complete Forestry Management Plan is available for reference at the Claremont Planning and Development Office.

Figure 6-3: Overall Facilities Map for Moody Park and Adjacent City Land

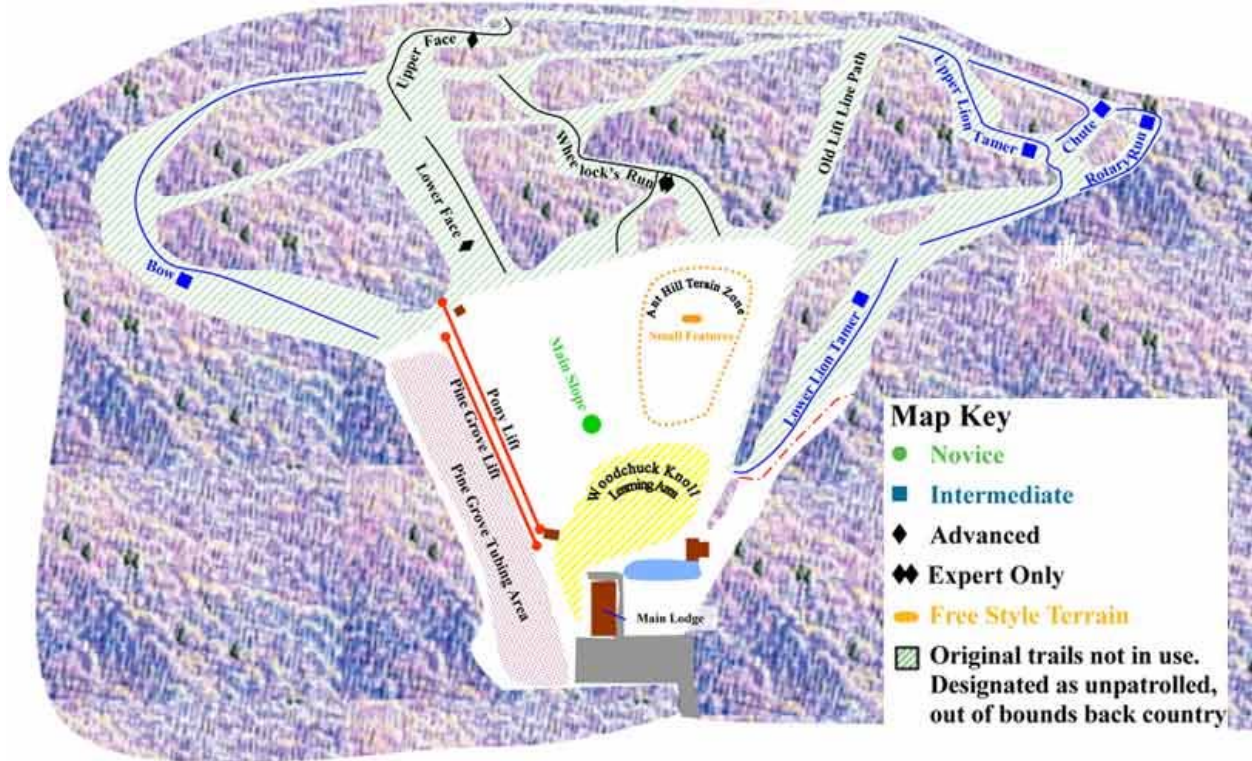


8.1.9 Arrowhead Recreation Area

The Arrowhead Recreation Area is a 204-acre parcel with access from South Street along Easter Way. This parcel is the site for many Parks & Recreation Department programs. This site abuts the Claremont Middle School and the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center.

The Arrowhead Recreation Area also hosts ski, snowboard, and snowtube slopes with rope tow service and snow making capacity. The Arrowhead Recreation Club (<http://www.arrowheadnh.com/>) manages these winter operations. The ski slopes opened in 1962 named King's Arrow, in association with a local hotel. From approximately 1979 to 1990 the facility was leased to the Kiwanis Club. In 2001 the Arrowhead Recreation Club was founded and the facility has been operational in many forms since that time. Figure 6-4 illustrates the current open and out of bounds trails for the ski area.

Figure 6-4: Trail Map for Arrowhead Recreation Area



8.1.10 Barnes Park

Barnes Park is located on North Street near the intersection of Elm St. It is home to local baseball games, and other sporting events. The parcel is approximately 7.4 acres including lighted playing fields, a playground, two lighted basketball courts, and bleachers that also house the existing Parks & Recreation Department equipment. During winter months there is a skating rink and warming hut in the park. This facility serves as a neighborhood park and a significant community recreation resource for year-round activities. Park hours are 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM.

In recent years neighboring homes have been demolished and the vacant lots provide additional parking space for Barnes Park. Parking is an important component for future use and planning at this property. Further discussion about future concerns and needs for this park continues later in this chapter.

8.1.11 Monadnock Park

Monadnock Park is located close to downtown with access from Broad Street and Chestnut Street. The parcel is approximately 21 acres with 2.75 acres of city-owned land abutting the parcel. The Monadnock Park abuts the city-owned rail trail that connects with other local and regional trail systems. Park hours are 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM.

The park facilities include playground equipment, tennis courts, a storage building, and a wide range of playing fields including football, regulation and little league baseball fields, a rubberized surface track, a multi-purpose field, and a softball field. Like other City Parks, Monadnock Park is the site of Claremont School District athletic program practices and competitions.

8.1.12 Ashley's Landing

The Col. Ashley Ferry Boat Landing, at the end of Ferry Landing Road, which is off of River Road in western Claremont, provides the only public access to the Connecticut River in the City. Facilities on the 2.1-acre site include a boat ramp, parking area, and opportunities for passive recreation. The parcel has approximately 940 linear feet of Connecticut River shoreline.



Table 6-1: Detailed Summary of Park Properties (Source: Claremont Parcel Database)

Park/Facility Name	Property Address	Tax Map Parcel (Map-Lot)	Area (acres)
Goodwin Community Center	130 Broad St	120-149	1.5
	13 Barber St	120-152	0.4
<i>Total Area:</i>			<i>1.9</i>
Moody Park	1 Moody Park Rd	130-122	5.4
	3 Moody Park Rd	141-1	90.0
<i>Total Area:</i>			<i>95.4</i>
Broad Street Park	Broad St	120-154	0.65
Veterans Park	25 Veterans Park Rd	96-86	9.0
	27 Veterans Park Rd	97-17	8.5
<i>Total Area:</i>			<i>17.5</i>
Arrowhead Recreation Area	18 Robert A Easter Way (off South St)	144-10	204.0
LaCasse Park	Lincoln Hts	n/a	n/a
Barnes Park	9 Bernard Way (off North St)	107-300	7.4
Factory St Park	2 Factory St	107-38	0.35
Monadnock Park	190 Broad Street	120-124	21.1
Smith Riverside Park	43 Washington St	108-125	2.6
Ashley's Landing	Ferry Landing Rd (off River Road)	140-13	2.1

Table 6-2: Summary Table of Recreational Facilities for Claremont Parks

	Goodwin Community Center	Moody Park	Broad Street Park	Veterans Park	Arrowhead Recreation Area	LaCasse Park	Barnes Park	Factory St Park	Monadnock Park	Smith Riverside Park	Ashley's Landing
Lodge					●						
Arrowhead Skiway					●						
Grandstand / Bleachers							●		●		
Indoor Gymnasium	●										
Indoor Pool	●										
Outdoor Pool				●							
Neighborhood Park		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Historic Features	●		●			●					
Basketball Court(s)	●		●								
Tennis Court(s)		●					●		●		
Lighted Court(s)							●				
Picnic Areas		●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●
Parking	●	●		●					●	●	●
Pavilion		●									
Playground		●		●			●		●		
Trails		●			●				●		
Skate Park										●	
Ice Skating		●			●						
Running Track									●		
Football Field							●*		●*		
Baseball Field							●*		●		
Softball Field				●			●*		●		
Soccer Field							●*		●*		
Lighted Field(s)				●			●		●		
Boat Ramp											●
Horseshoe Pits				●							

●*: Indicates the facilities are located on multi-purpose fields.

8.2 Planned Facility Needs and Improvements

Planning for future facility improvements is important to maintain a parks and recreation system that serves the community. The recreation system is integral to the City's planning and it has become common knowledge that quality recreational opportunities play a factor in individual or corporate decisions to reside or locate a business in an area. The City should seek to maintain the current level of service by the Parks & Recreation Department and pursue opportunities to improve these facilities and programs.

8.2.1 Overall Parks & Recreation Facility Needs and Planning

There are a number of broad categories for facility needs that require planning. Some of these needs are necessary to maintain the current level of service and quality of facilities. Other needs have been identified to meet a current facility demand and will improve the City's capacity to respond to trends and changes in park facility use. Identified recreation needs and planning opportunities that may apply city-wide include, but are not limited to:

- Develop a pedestrian facility along the Sugar River corridor. This facility will promote connections among residential and commercial areas, existing parks, and the downtown business district.
- Develop an overall pedestrian plan that connects all major and neighborhood parks. This plan may identify pedestrian connections along existing sidewalks and paths and required physical improvements.
- Trends in usage indicate an inherent demand for covered function areas, or picnic pavillions, in public parks. Increase the number of picnic pavillions in the park system.
- The Claremont School District currently relies on Parks & Recreation Department facilities for athletic program practice and competition space. The City and the School District should assess opportunities to expand dedicated school facilities while maintaining sufficient service to the general public. This program may include developing a short-term agreement to share facility maintenance costs.

8.2.2 Charles Goodwin Community Center

The GCC requires regular maintenance of its aging facilities to maintain the current level of service. Any effort to restore full use of the facility would require substantial investment based on a comprehensive restoration program. At present, the City has developed plans for a new community center to replace GCC (further discussion below).

The City should develop a supplemental plan for the GCC facilities to address future use options and associated costs. The plan may address the following points:

- Reassigning use of the existing facility once the new community center is operational.
- Developing a contingency plan for renovations to the GCC to continue use as a community center if the fundraising efforts are not successful.

8.2.3 Planned New Community Center

A group of volunteers, community businesses, and City representatives recognize the current limitations of the GCC facility and initiated a facility planning process. This process began in 2001 and at the time of this Master Plan update the proposed community center has been designed and is nearly ready for construction.

The planned community center facility will be located at the corner of Broad Street and South Street. The facility will house an eight lane competition pool, a leisure pool, an elevated walking track, a two court gymnasium, a cardio fitness room, an exercise classroom, a community function room, and the Parks &

Recreation Department office. A non-profit organization, New Community Center for Claremont, Inc. (N3C), is currently fundraising for the development with substantial support from community businesses and individuals.

8.2.4 Veterans Park

There is substantial need for maintenance of the existing facilities at Veterans Park. The maintenance program includes renovation and equipment maintenance at the outdoor pool and bath house and associated facilities, maintenance of the parking lot. Additional improvements to the park under consideration include landscape and improvements to the park design, as well as installing a fenced-in, off-leash dog park.

8.2.5 Moody Park

It will be important to implement the Forest Management Plan to maintain the quality of the existing forested areas and trails system in Moody Park. Other needs at Moody Park match city-wide issues, including maintenance of the vehicular road and parking facilities, improving picnic facilities and available covered function space, and providing open recreation areas. There is opportunity to clear an open, multi-purpose playing field in the park. The sandy soils on the property will require special planning and amending the soil for growing turf.

8.2.6 Barnes Park

Barnes Park is home to a grandstand that also houses the Parks & Recreation Department Maintenance Facility. The overall grandstand structure does not meet current needs for either use due to the need for general repairs and improvements and inadequate space for the Maintenance Facility. Specific improvements should include accessible bathroom facilities and changing room space for the public and school-sponsored events at the park.

Future planning for this park should include consideration of acquiring abutting lots for park use. Such a planning effort should identify future activity areas, potential landscape and access improvements, and identifying parking areas.

9 COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

The Recreation Department conducted a Needs Assessment Study for its facility planning in 2001 and the City of Claremont conducted a broader Community Attitude Survey in 2008 as part of the master planning effort. The following tables summarize the community responses to these surveys.

9.1 2001 Recreation Needs Assessment Study

The City Recreation Department conducted this survey to help determine citizen usage, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The scope of this survey ranged from perceived quality of recreation facilities in the City to stated needs and preferences for new or renovated facilities. The following bullets summarize community attitudes about existing facilities at the time of the survey.

- Half of the responding households participating in recreational programs. 89% of the participating programs responded that the programs were Excellent (32%) or Good (57%).
- 78% of responding households stated that they had visited a park in the last year. 75% of those respondents rated parks as Excellent (20%) or Good (55%).
- The most popular programs included Art/Theater/Outdoor Concerts, Recreational Swimming, Special Events, Youth Basketball & Baseball, Youth Swim Lessons, and Walking Programs.
- The most popular facilities included trails, neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and indoor facilities.

9.2 2008 Community Attitude Survey

The City's Community Attitude Survey addressed a broad range of City services, facilities, and regulations. The survey also requested opinions regarding future land use and funding options. The following tables summarize survey responses relevant to recreational facilities.

Table 6-3: Public Opinion - Importance of City Attributes

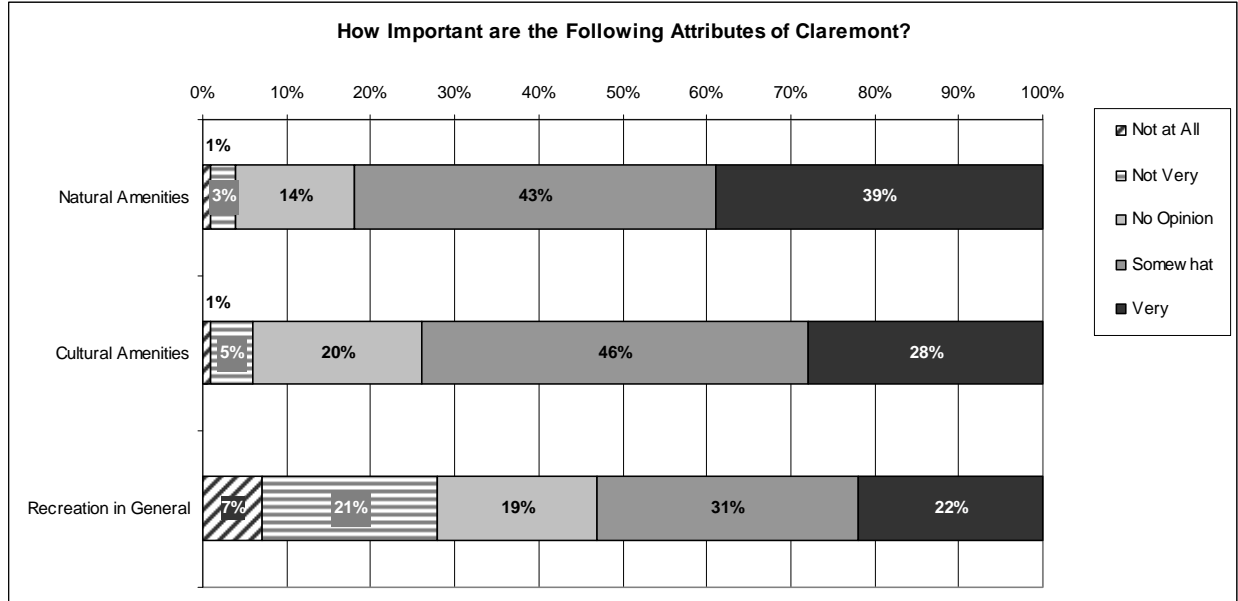
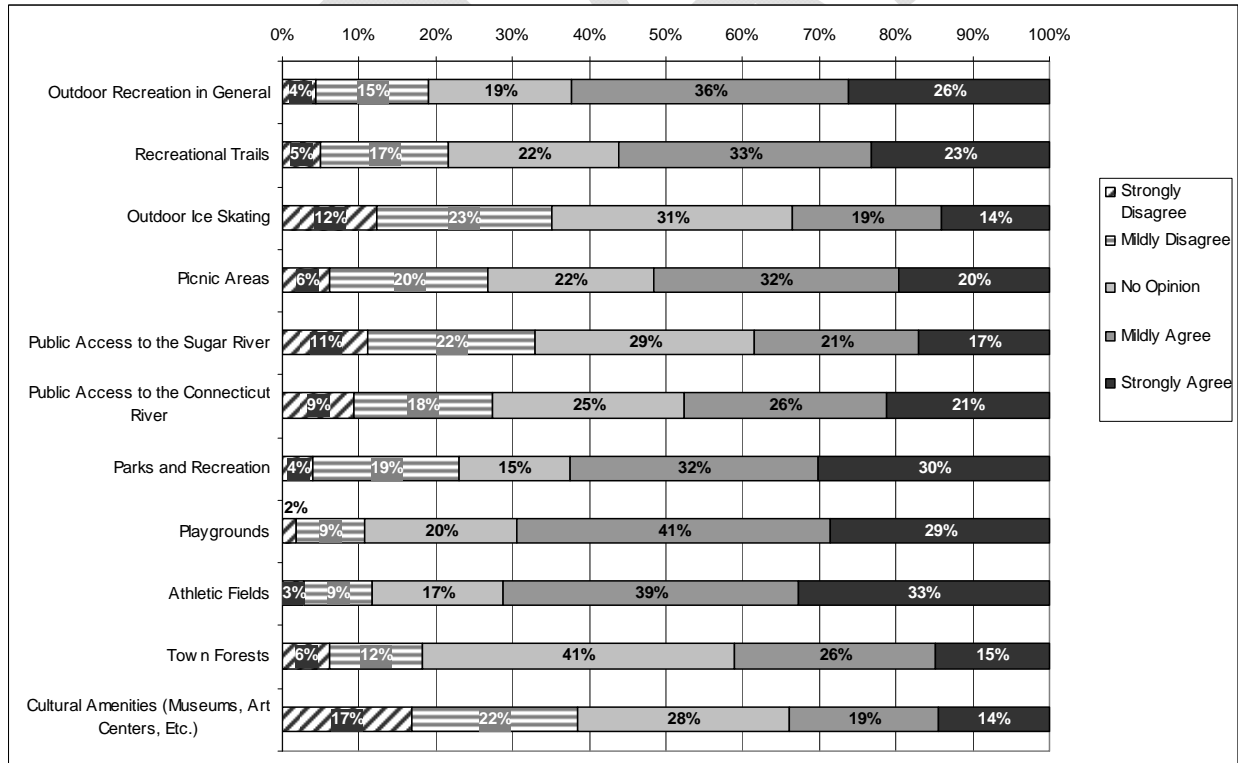


Table 6-4: Public Opinion - Sufficiency of Funding for Recreational Facilities and Programs



10 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL #1: MAINTAIN EXISTING PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR ITS PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Objective 1: Regularly update facility needs through the City Capital Improvements Program

Objective 2: Develop an agreement between the City and the School District to share maintenance costs of City facilities utilized by the School District.

Objective 3: Implement the Forest Management Plan for all forested Parks & Recreation Department parcels.

GOAL #2: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PARK IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS

Objective 1: Facilitate and support fundraising and construction of the planned new community center.

Objective 2: Develop a comprehensive facility plan for City parks and recreation areas and programs. Monitor and report on facility usage trends to indicate facility deficiencies, unmet community needs, and opportunities for new facilities or programs.

- Request feedback from program participants regarding program quality and individual feedback to make improvements and/or adjustments.
- Develop an improvement plan for every park managed by the Parks & Recreation Department. This plan may include planned improvements to existing facilities, new facilities, and improvements to access and open spaces.
- Develop a pedestrian plan connecting all parks, including a pedestrian path along the Sugar River corridor.

Objective 3: Identify opportunities for facility improvements and expansion.

- Evaluate public and privately owned parcels for future acquisition and incorporation into the City parks and recreation system.
- Work with the Claremont School District to plan for future City and School District recreational facility needs.